

ON *AQUILA BIFASCIATA* AND *AQUILA ORIENTALIS*,—
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I have long had in my possession two specimens of *Aquila orientalis*, Cab., one sent me by Dr. Bree and labelled by Mr. Gurney, and the other from Mr. Dresser. The latter is a Sarepta specimen from the Volga region, and the former, from the Dobrudscha.

On returning the Dobrudscha example, which Dr. Bree had submitted to Mr. Gurney, the latter sent the following memorandum.

“The eagle which I have ticketed ‘*Aquila orientalis*, Cab.,’ is identical with that so often sent in collections from Sarepta near the mouth of the Volga, and is in fact the only species of Eagle which I have seen from that locality. I have hitherto been in the habit of calling this eagle ‘*Aquila clanga* of Pallas,’ but as Pallas does not appear, by the description of his *Aquila clanga* in the Zoog. Ross. As., Vol. I, p. 351, to distinguish between this eagle and the smaller spotted eagle *A. nævia*, and as his measurements, which are given in old French feet, inches, and lines, (for a scale of which see Finsch and Hartlaub’s Vögel Ostfr.) agree better with *A. nævia* than with the present species, it will perhaps be best to adopt for the present species the name of *Aq. orientalis*, proposed by Cabanis in the Journal für Orn. 1854, p. 369, (note), which though not very well chosen is the next in order of priority and the earliest that can with certainty be applied to this eagle exclusively. The specimen now sent appears by its measurements to be a female, and is in adult plumage; the immature birds of this species being spotted in precisely the same manner as those of *Aquila nævia* which is well shewn in Yarrell’s figure of the ‘Spotted Eagle.’”

I quote this memorandum by Mr. Gurney to shew upon what good authority one of my specimens is named *Aquila orientalis*, and the other, sent me by Mr. Dresser labelled *A. clanga*, Sarepta, closely resembles it.

Mr. Gurney’s statement, that the immature is spotted like *Aquila nævia*, is, as far as I can see at present, a mistake; for we have the bird in India (*A. bifasciata*) and it never in any way resembles *A. nævia*.

I have, from the first, been struck by the great similarity of these two specimens to our Indian *Aquila bifasciata*, Gray and Hardwick; but had not till the other day obtained Indian specimens according in every respect, to a feather, with the European examples of *A. orientalis*, above referred to. Now I have, and the accordance is so beautifully perfect, that there is no

alternative, but to come to the conclusion that *A. orientalis* is identical in every respect with *A. bifasciata*.*

I have now, therefore, three European killed examples of *A. bifasciata*; the third being that sent me by Capt. Elwes, and referred to in "Stray Feathers," Vol. I, p. 291. The two first are in nearly mature plumage, and the third is quite mature; and is the finest specimen of the bird I have seen.

The two sent as "*A. orientalis*" have only slight indications of the nuchal patch; otherwise I should have recognized them at the first glance as *A. bifasciata*, as was the case with Capt. Elwes's Bosphorus bird. This term has, I believe, priority over *A. orientalis*, Cabanis, and if so will be retained for this eagle.

The application of Pallas's term "*A. clanga*" to the same species by some European writers is, I believe, an error, if I read the original description correctly. It appears to refer to our Indian spotted eagle which we accept as *Aq. nævia*, and which I believe to be the true *nævia*. Klein, whose work is dated 1750, is the author of the term *Aquila clanga*, and Pallas quotes and adopts this *synonym* in preference to the older term *Aquila nævia*, Schwenckfield. This term Pallas also quotes under the head of *Aquila clanga*, but as a *synonym*. Schwenckfield's work is dated 1603.

In a letter received the other day from my friend Mr. Anderson, he records the occurrence of a lineated *A. Mogilnik* at Aden, which was stunned by flying against the telegraph wires there.

I may as well mention here that the Indian Imperial Eagle, to which I applied Hodgson's term of *A. crassipes*, is identical with the East European bird, *A. Mogilnik*, better known as *A. imperialis*, but the former is the prior term.

I compared our bird with an adult Turkish specimen sent me by Dr. Bree. Mr. Gurney also came to the same conclusion, after comparing the adult Indian birds, I had sent home, with European examples.

The West European Imperial Eagle is, however, quite distinct and is now known as *A. Adalberti*, Brehm. This is the species said to have no lineated stage, and having, when adult, an excess of white on the scapulars and ridge of wing.

* [Mr. V. Ball and I had the pleasure of comparing the two specimens of *A. orientalis*, referred to by Mr. Brooks, with a series of Indian *A. bifasciata*. They undoubtedly appear to be perfectly identical, both in structure and coloration. If the determination of those two specimens as *A. orientalis* is correct, (and upon such good authority, as Mr. Gurney, it ought to be), there can be no doubt that the two species must be considered as identical. *F. Stoliczka.*]

I sent a fine series of our Indian *Aquila hastata* to the Norwich Museum. Mr. Anderson also sent one example in mature plumage.

Besides these we sent others to ornithological friends. I hear from Messrs. Gurney and Dresser, that the adult plumage of this species is not to be distinguished from that of the small Pomeranian spotted Eagle which they term the true *Aquila nœvia*.

They assert, however, that though the adults are alike, the immature birds differ.

This is a point for further investigation, but the perfect accordance of the adults leads me to expect the same in the immature birds. The connection between the immature and the adult is the first point to be established, and this can only be done by the field naturalist.

One of my ornithological friends informs me that the immature of *A. orientalis* (which we have shewn is *A. bifasciata*), has spotted plumage like that of *A. nœvia*; another friend informs me he has received the immature bird, and it "is strangely like *A. bifasciata*!" Now the latter eagle is *not spotted*, and the "doctors," who are both men of repute, "differ."

These points will all be cleared up it is to be hoped before long; and we shall perhaps have the natural history of the Eagles as clear and as correct as that of the common Rook, with little or nothing else to be learned. At present the Eagles appear to be in a state of dire confusion, which the English naturalists are daily making worse.*

* Since the foregoing was written, Capt G. F. L. Marshall, who is much interested in this subject, came and examined the series used. He fully concurred in the identification of *A. orientalis* with *A. bifasciata*, and was even more positive than I was that the Danzig killed *Aquila hastata* was indeed that species. It will be remembered, it was sent to me labelled "*A. nœvia*." My English Ornithological friends with whom I communicated are incredulous regarding my identifications, and I, therefore, refer to my friend's corroboration. If all fails to convince them I shall have the series exhibited at a meeting of the Zool. Society.